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THE MORAL PROBLEMS OF WAR.

It is not easy to say formally what would be a quite scientific way of handling the general question of the comparative justifiableness of wars, or even of any war in particular. An ostensibly complete inquiry would involve not only much examination of "classic" doctrines, but a good deal of moral metaphysics, which would tend to resemble in point of duration the catching of De Wet; and meantime *the* war under special notice might be brought to an end by haphazard. One should therefore be slow to object to such an interesting essay as that of Professor Ritchie, on "War and Peace" in the last number of this journal that it is not exactly scientific. Its author, however, takes occasion to make among many other flings this, that some people "like to trace the origin of a war to the intemperate language of some diplomatist or statesman or to the interested schemes of some self-seeking financier. . . . But such explanations are not very scientific." Now, it seems to some of us a plain historical fact that a number of wars have been "determined" in some such fashion as is put in the above-cited phrases, and that therefore the propositions in question may be in the ordinary sense of the term quite scientific. And as Professor Ritchie sees fit thus to stigmatize perfectly relevant propositions in regard to a given case, one is moved to avow in reply one's impression that his own method is considerably less scientific than that he impugns. And one may even

make bold, in this tentative fashion, to sketch a relatively scientific method for a given case.

As having meditated the matter a good deal before the appearance of Professor Ritchie's essay (to which, however, I desire to acknowledge obligations) I am disposed to reproach him with reintroducing a number of negligible issues—issues, that is, which need not be reopened in connection with those which he obviously recognizes as more actual. But inasmuch as he does re-introduce, for instance, the question of the morality of the trade of soldiering, he ought, I submit, to have gone a little further into it than he reaches by exposing the inconsistency of Dymond. The inner problem as to the soldier is surely this, that seeing all reasoning men admit the possibility of their nation's making an unjust aggression, it is obviously questionable whether a scrupulous man can fitly take up a function which may mean his having to kill people whose cause he knows to be just. Some officers and private soldiers, to my knowledge, find themselves in that dilemma in the present war in South Africa. On the general issue the best practical answer, I believe, consists in pointing out that the problem involves the policeman, the judge, the jailer, and the civil servant, and even implicates a great many people in private employment. While the pressure of this difficulty does not dismiss the problem from the field of practical ethics, it suggests the inexpediency of putting it in the front of any dispute on a question of immediate public action. But *a fortiori* the issue ought not to be broadened by a random discussion in such a connection.

What Professor Ritchie does sufficiently indicate is that few people are to be influenced by a polemic against war on either *a priori* or theological grounds—that every war, in short, had need be discussed on its moral merits. It is, in fact, after following many such discussions that many of those who are called “peace people” have come to the conclusion that almost all wars do more harm than good even to the winning side; that many are the result of sheer defect of wisdom on the part of statesmen on both sides; and that where a war is “justifiable” as being one of defence, the aggressor is in the terms of

the case deserving of utter reprobation. Inasmuch as he has spared us the rhetoric so customary among apologists for given wars, as to the moral education yielded by warfare, Professor Ritchie is entitled to our thanks; but it is disappointing to find him, when expressly bent on a study of the effects of wars, making a much less thorough inquiry on that head than has often been made by some of the people of whom he speaks with varying degrees of disrespect. And this shortcoming has the very serious result that he has virtually advocated or encouraged wars of conquest under certain conditions, on the score of certain benefits to mankind which he quite erroneously implies to have been the result of conquest.

The problem cannot be better broached, for present purposes, than by taking up one of Professor Ritchie's central propositions. "If," he writes (JOURNAL, January, 1901, p. 157):

"If we wish to know how war is to cease, we should ask ourselves how it *has* ceased. Why is there no longer war between England and Scotland? Why did Prussian and Hanoverian fight side by side in 1870, though they had fought each other only four years before? The rise of modern nations meant the suppression of private and tribal wars and of wars between rival cities. The absorption of smaller nations into larger political bodies means the prevention of war within great areas."

The form of the argument here seems to me to show that after all Professor Ritchie has *not* asked himself how war "*has* ceased," as he loosely puts it, even within given areas. No one, so far as I know, has hitherto objected to the extension of national systems by the peaceful and voluntary union of states; and by reasoning as he does Professor Ritchie has inevitably the effect of contending that a forcible unification by conquest, however desperate, is in the end as good a thing as a willing federation. War between England and Scotland was greatly limited by the peaceful union of the crowns in 1603; though the two countries were again virtually at war as such in the period of the Commonwealth. The last case of war as between Scottish and English sections was the rebellion of 1745, where that Scottish section which had *not* been consulted at the union of the Parliaments made all the trouble. When then we further note that the attempt of Edward I. to *force* Scotland into union at the end of the thirteenth century

led to the humiliation of the greater power, and to a state of chronic strife between the two kingdoms for three hundred years, our conclusion must surely be that, so far, unification seems to be beneficial or desirable only in so far as it is accomplished without violence. Now, such a conclusion is practically the contradiction of what is insinuated in many passages by Professor Ritchie with regard to the present war in South Africa.

The different case of Hanover and Prussia is really no less subversive of the position he appears to frame on it. The very fact that Hanoverians, after their forcible absorption by Prussia, fought on the Prussian side in 1870, is so far as it goes a proof that one forcible assimilation of a small state by a greater may be for the latter a stepping-stone to a great and lamentable war. It is odd that any one should say war was prevented "within great areas" on the strength of the fact that after a small war between Hanover and Prussia, ostensibly preventive of future wars between them, but in itself actually the first breach of the peace between them for over sixty years, Prussia got up (as is admitted by Professor Ritchie, p. 147) the tremendous war of 1870. If the Professor is driving at anything practical, it is at a vindication of the forcible absorption of Hanover as a means of making war "cease." But the only previous risk of war between Prussia and Hanover lay in the Prussian desire to dominate Hanover. On Professor Ritchie's theory, that desire was thus a sufficient excuse for its own gratification. Meantime, though Prussia did *not* absorb Austria when she absorbed Hanover, there has since been peace between Prussia and Austria, as between Prussia and Hanover. Thus the proof is beside the case. It is significant that what is in effect a plea for forcible conquest in our own day should land its framer in such paralogisms as these.

I am not concerned here to ask whether the absorption of Hanover by Prussia has been of such immense moral benefit to Germany as to countervail the immense evil of the new militarism caused by the Franco-German war. The case of Hanover—a German state absorbed into a larger Germany—is past and done with; and it yields us no light whatever on the

case at which Professor Ritchie constantly points his remarks without naming it—the present Boer war. For partial parallels to that war we may rather look to the English attempt to conquer Scotland, the conquest of Ireland, the partition of Poland, and the revolt of the American colonies. In every one of these cases the lesson is patently contrary to the opinion that the unconditional conquest of the two republics should be persisted in, or that such a conquest, if ultimately effected, will make for peace and civilization.

Let us take it either way. Should the attempt fail, as I think it may, the situation will be analogous to that set up as between Scotland and England from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, and between England and the United States from, let us say, 1774 till 1874. There are of course no true parallels in history; but we are entitled to predict, under similar leading conditions, similar broad results—in this case a steadfast ill-will, always liable to explode in active hate. But we may go even further as regards South Africa. The special impolicy of the present war on the British side, it is argued, lies in the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of our own Cape Colony are the immediate blood relatives of the Boers, and in strong and natural sympathy with them; whence results the probability of an anti-English coalition among the whole Dutch population. The utmost stress of racial malice has now been set up through all South Africa; and the prospects are black even to the optimists of imperialism. I may remind Professor Ritchie that in Scotland about the year 1550, after the second English attempt to coerce the smaller state into union, “It was told how the Scots, poor as they were, would buy from the French, at ransom price, English prisoners, for the sheer enjoyment of putting them to death. . . . The Scots gave freely whatever was demanded, and if they had not money for the purchase, would part with their arms or horses for the object of their desire. . . . When the Scots” thus got a prisoner “they placed him within a circle of their horsemen, who galloped up and lanced him, and then cutting him to pieces, they carried off portions of his flesh on their lance-points” (Burton, iii. 279, citing Beaugué). To such ex-

tremity of savagery could a fresh attempt at conquest bring civilized men of the same race as their assailants. The Boers of to-day, doubtless, are much better men than the Scotch of the days of Knox; but if they are half as "backward" as our war-mongers allege, they must be capable of a tolerable stress of resentment for the handling they have had. And if they are not thus backward, one requires to have it shown wherein the war is a moral gain.

Let us suppose, on the other hand, that the war ends in their subjection, and that thenceforth they are to be governed, as far as possible, on normal British principles. The analogy here will be with the cases of Ireland and Poland. I do not find that Professor Ritchie has anything to show for the gains from absorption in these cases, though, raising another issue, he suggests that Poland by her anarchy brought partition on herself. Putting that issue aside, we may surely say that there has been at least no discoverable gain to mankind that can be set against the long evolution of abnormal evil in Poland under Russian and in Ireland under English rule. And when such has been the sequence in the historic cases most nearly analogous to that under discussion, we are entitled, I think, to express surprise that an inquirer who professes to be discussing the policy of conquest in terms of the effects on civilization should leave such sequences unmentioned.

It may not be unserviceable thus to place a concrete utilitarian discussion in the front of a discourse on the Moral Problem of War. It is in the nature of things that any attempt in such a connection to challenge a moral verdict in terms of acquired habit of moral feeling will be met by appeals to utilitarian tests. Professor Ritchie in particular, of whom it may be said in the manner of one of his own phrases that he has a "special horror of what he calls sentimentalism," will on such a challenge make play with what some of us in turn call sentimentalism *par excellence*. He fears above all things to appeal to what all ethical experience pronounces to be the highest generalization of normal duty—the law of reciprocity: rather he will plunge every moral case into the cumbrous crucibles of hypothetical evolutionary utility. To this course, in

the interests of healthy discussion, no objection can ever be made; indeed the appeal to utility must on occasion be made by every one of us as against the appeal to lower habits of feeling than the principle of sympathy. But it is essential that, in the case of appeal to utility as against sympathy, above all others, the tests should be whole-heartedly applied. I have sought to show that in the instance before us they have not been: that on the contrary the argument from experience has been so loosely managed, and the inferences often so superficially drawn, as to entitle us to call them sentimental in both the literal and the popular force of that term. It will now be technically fitting to face the problem from within. In the case of any war of aggression, people who are normally concerned for right action tend spontaneously to apply the test of reciprocity. Is the aggressor doing as he would be done by? No time need be spent over the point that the formal aggressor is at times not the real aggressor: Professor Ritchie expressly admits that the formal aggressor may at times be acting in self-defence. But it may be worth noting on that head that whereas the Boers have been pronounced by the great majority of Europeans, and by many Englishmen, to have been morally "justified" in beginning the war, seeing that the enemy was avowedly preparing to attack them, they themselves are now frequently found to admit* that their course was both a political and a moral error. That is to say, even where a menaced state secures an immediate military advantage by taking the initiative, its course may set up on the other side so much extra energy of animosity, and so much positive necessity for action, as to alter the previous balance of moral impulse no less than the previous equation of available forces. The argument here is both ethical, in the sense of appealing to established habits of moral feeling, and utilitarian. It may be better, in short, to bear a measure of wrong, and the relative disadvantage of being attacked, than to forestall the enemy's purposed wrong by making him suffer.

The central problem, however, is that of real aggression.

*I have lately conversed on the subject with a number of Transvaalers in South Africa, and in *all* cases the admission was freely made.

In view of the line taken by such a moralist as Professor Ritchie, there can be no exaggeration in saying that many less instructed people in these days are ready to justify a war of conquest, involving immense destruction of life and property and enormous suffering on the part of non-combatants, on the score that in the long run it will promote "civilization"; and that they consider this plea sufficient to override all appeals to what they call "sentiment"—such as the exhortation to do as you would be done by, and to respect in another people that passion for political independence which we avowedly cherish for ourselves. Many go still further, nakedly arguing that "might is right," and that small states may count on being conquered by great states as small business concerns may count on being beaten and absorbed by big ones. But though this naked negation of ethics is a very significant phenomenon, taken in connection with the other lines of the argument for conquest, I am content here to put them aside as being repudiated by the more scrupulous people on the same side, and to take that side as it is represented by the latter.

In the belief that I am thereby simplifying as well as shortening the discussion, I shall go straight to what seems to me the decisive or practical issue, namely, In what cases may we consistently set a limit (or *quasi* limit, by way of definition) to the admittedly reasonable law of doing as we would be done by, even in its more limited and more practicable negative form? Personally, I incline to think that we should do much better to break down accepted limits than to set up new—that is to say, that forbearance with criminals will do far more for moral civilization than any introduction of new forms of social reprobation. But let us take a practical or middle line, and say that, even as the test of utility warns us not to forgive all wrong-doers on the mere ground that we should like to be forgiven if we did the same wrong, so it may conceivably warn us against treating another nation as we should want it to treat us if our rôles were reversed. To my own thinking, all ethics turns and will continue to turn on the dual principles of the acquired habit of feeling (supposed to be purified to the point of recognizing the law of reciprocity) and the test of

objective utility, the latter coming into play of necessity where the former either fails to direct or seems to supply conflicting prescriptions. Where, then, or why, ought we begin to restrict that general prescription, Do not do to others what you would deeply resent their doing to you?

It is so much to have the Confucian rule generally accepted, that though it seems to some of us a bad sign when new restrictions are seriously mooted, we may consent to much debate about its restriction rather than face the risk of its wide rejection, which would mean moral anarchy. Professor Ritchie, in the name of ethical science, argues (p. 156) that a special restriction must begin when we pass from the relations of individuals within a state to the relations of states. "A war . . . is one form of natural selection . . . civilized sovereignty does not mean the same thing as ownership of property. It is mere careless rhetoric when acquisition of new territory is spoken of as 'robbery' or 'burglary.'" One might have thought that it was mere careless rhetoric, in an ethical discussion on war, to argue that a war is a form of natural selection; for that ostensibly means, if anything, that it is outside the purview of ethics. But as Professor Ritchie is expressly repudiating careless rhetoric he must be taken to be arguing seriously and, in his own view, relevantly. One must then put the obvious question, Is not a private struggle a form of natural selection? And if I murder or rob my enemy, am I admitted to have made any defence if I plead that his extinction or spoliation is a form of natural selection? Further, if it may be good for civilization to let one state confiscate another, may it not be good for civilization that one man should "rob" another? In all seriousness, I do not see how Professor Ritchie can answer off-hand in the negative, though he seems to assume that "a person" is subject to an absolute moral law and that a nation is not. "A nation, *after all*," he writes (p. 144) "*is only by metaphor an individual organism or person*"—as who should say, "Of course, if it were an individual organism, no such question could arise." But let us pass the assumption and ask whether a corporation or company, as not being save by metaphor an individual organism or person, is not entitled to legal

protection where an individual is? Obviously the words "person" and "organism" have no question-begging privilege in ethics that is denied to "nation"; and every question Professor Ritchie raises about aggressive war may fitly be raised on behalf of theft and murder. All he can plead is that general experience has settled the point about theft and murder, whereas he and others hold the question open as regards aggressive war, or rather, hold aggressive war to be at times distinctly a right because a beneficial course. I answer that *by such tests as he applies*, robbery and even murder might often be made out to be beneficial, as transferring wealth from a fool or a rascal to a clever man bent on helping the deserving poor, including himself.

If, however, we waive the dilemma as against Professor Ritchie, and grant him the common consent that murder and robbery must be vetoed in every community, the next step is all the simpler. There were certainly stages in social evolution in which homicide and robbery were much less stringently vetoed than they are now; and in those stages, in all likelihood, a number of people deprecated or denounced proposals to promote the repression of homicide and robbery, on the grounds above indicated. Either we agree to-day that such virtual vindications of occasional homicide and robbery were morally wrong and politically fallacious, or we re-open that issue for our own day. And exactly so is it with Professor Ritchie's plea for occasional wars of aggression. The general human attitude towards war has modified in course of time as did the general human attitude towards private and personal war and rapine. The present war has been perhaps more widely and earnestly demanded than any other war in all history. The movement of civilized feeling is clearly more and more towards the vetoing of all wars of aggression, and to the denial that war makes for civilization in any way whatever. The plea for the beneficence of conquest at the present stage is on all fours with a conceivable mediæval plea that an able man should be free to fight for the possession of the lands of a neighbor less able, or to confiscate the lands of a widow or an orphan.

To such pleas, we can easily supply a retrospective answer, in terms of both psychological and political tests, or of what we may term external and internal utilities. Had the ruler chosen to wink at the license craver, not only would the able spoliator set up against himself a host of new hatreds, aiming at fresh violence (all men disputing his title of superiority), but he himself, if successful, would be so far demoralized, and could not in the least be trusted to make a good use of his lawless gains. And this brings us to one of the most glaring oversights in the ordinary argument for "empire," even as expounded by Professor Ritchie. Not once, in all his summaries as to the effects of given conquest on civilization, does he directly face the problem of the effects of conquest and empire on the conqueror. Once he does touch on it incidentally. "The *pax Romana*," he concedes (p. 151), "proves, *perhaps*, that the blessings of mere peace are over-estimated by those who realize the horrors of war, but have had *no experience* of the evils of stagnation and torpor." On which it may be observed (1) that the *pax Romana* (*qua pax*) is one of the great illusions of conventional history; (2) that the blessings of that are grossly over-estimated by many who have before them the vast object lesson of the political and intellectual ruin of the Roman Empire; and (3) that such an easy dismissal of "the evils of stagnation and torpor," which mean the negation of all moral prosperity, almost caps the theorem of De Quincey, that the practice of murder leads inevitably to incivility and procrastination. It seems the more necessary to point out that the *pax Romana* was of old a plea for the kind of policy defended by our imperialists to-day; and that the pursuit of that policy meant the final conquest of Rome by its own brutality and moral barbarism as surely as the conquest of the surrounding world.

It cannot be too often repeated that the vindication of democracy lies, not in any superiority of wisdom on the part of the many to the few, but in the principle that the least wise among us has a right to a voice in the legislative shaping of his life, on the ground that none, broadly speaking, can be trusted to make laws justly for those who have no power of check on

their ruling. In other words, it makes for "civilization" to recognize the reciprocal claims of all citizens and the danger of irresponsible power. Oddly enough, this seems to be taken for granted by Professor Ritchie. One would expect him to ask how we can be sure that self-government is a good thing for civilization. But, for reasons which may be inferred, he is on that head soundly "sentimental." When, then, a democracy or a *quasi* democracy proceeds to coerce another self-governing community on the plea of advancing civilization, it is giving the lie to its own fundamental principle, and the professed democrats who justify such coercion are men forsworn. And the sequel is historically so sure that we may call it a law of political evolution. The principle of democracy, negated at its source, suffers paralysis; and the ruling community comes to be ruled by the brute force it had created and sanctioned. The negation of reciprocity, become a habit in the international relation, becomes a habit in the national relation to the point of introducing and helplessly maintaining absolutism; and tends to become a habit in the social relation to the limit of the socially possible, save for the pure chance that the autocracy may restrain it. "Natural selection" thus becomes the determinant all round, in a multiplying ratio to the disuse of ethical selection, and the state is strangled by the principle of empire.

For the present purpose, it is needless to deal at length with Professor Ritchie's suggestion (p. 151) as to the probability that "a few great empires, in which self-governing communities control the less advanced races," may "represent a higher stage" than one of *laissez-faire*. The sufficient comments are (1) that no empire whatever is now doing anything for the healthy development of the lower races; (2) that the ethical course is not such control as is now employed but an unselfish leading such as imperialists are unfitted to give; and (3) that if the argument about lower races be transferred (as it is by some) to the case of a rapidly advancing community such as the Boers, there has occurred merely a bad abuse of language. It is nothing to the purpose, in this connection, to argue that "the nation, especially the nation which represents only one

homogeneous race," is not necessarily the "highest and final type of political society." That may readily be granted. The question is, is a higher type now to be reached by wilful conquest and coercion? And when Professor Ritchie loosely and vaguely contends that "the nation which not merely conquers but maintains its conquests," setting up a *pax Romana* and spreading "civilization over a larger part of the world," has "justified itself in the judgment of history," he reveals once for all that his undertaking to make a utilitarian test normally override the test of such a principle as the law of reciprocity (or the rule that honesty is the best policy) is at once formally and practically futile. For on his own showing a given conquest cannot be "justified" till long after it is accomplished; and even then the justification is in terms of constantly varying conceptions of civilization. To the eye of Dante, the dead Roman Empire was the topmost triumph of civilization; to many modern eyes it represents the gradual paralysis and destruction of civilization.

Now the term "justified," so often used by Professor Ritchie with no apparent misgiving, turns out to be the ground of a contest on which depends the fate of his whole thesis. Justified for whom, to what sense, by what test? Whose judgment is the judgment of history? Wherein lies the true measure of civilization? As against Professor Ritchie's constant tacit assumption that the tests are the mere majority vote, the mere formal "success" of the larger aggregate, the mere geographical spread of competitive commerce and certain social usages, I submit that his own use of the word civilization implicitly negates such assumptions. While disparaging the spirit which sympathizes with small states as against great,* and even disputing the moral "right" of nations to defend themselves when attacked; while staking the whole moral issue on an unverifiable and unspecified gain or loss to "civilization"

*Here Professor Ritchie ignores the obvious presumption that a small state will rarely seek to attack a great one; and the usual belief that in the given case it is the great state that is the aggressor. "Small," of course, is to be construed broadly, as sometimes a large state may be visibly decrepit on the military side.

in terms of non-ethical phenomena, he all the while shows that for him civilization means among other things an advance in the tendency to set the law of reciprocity in general command, and keep utility as its check or advisory colleague, rather than to make the latter a capricious autocrat with its feet on the other's neck. Thus his very conception of civilization is in continual conflict with his formal method of measuring its progress.

The charge of perversity is so often lightly made without even a show of justification, that a scrupulous criticism will perhaps hesitate to advance it even on the basis of a body of ostensible proof. But it is fair criticism to say that Professor Ritchie's habit, in ethics, of reopening the question whether honesty is the best policy wherever national or corporate perversity gives him the license, seems to be injurious to the very faculty of moral logic. In a discussion elsewhere he repeatedly insinuated that the shortness of an opponent's stay in South Africa discredited his opinion (though that was fully reasoned) as against the opinion of Sir Alfred Milner, who had been there for a longer period. On that footing, any litigant might condemn the opinion of a judge who in a few weeks disposed of a suit on which the litigant's mind had been fixed for twenty years. The principle, in fact, leads us to look for the decisive opinion on the South African question from the mouth of the oldest inhabitant. Men with far longer and fuller administrative knowledge of South Africa than Sir Alfred Milner possesses, pronounce him lamentably wrong. Yet the habit of formally subordinating the claims of every order of moral feeling to a class of experimental tests which in the nature of things can be applied only with endless difficulty and uncertainty, can lead one of his partisans into setting the weaker measure of experimental authority above the stronger, in the very act of making the argument from personal authority grotesque by putting on it a chronological measure.

And the unfortunate practical effect is that Professor Ritchie's just personal authority as a philosophic disputant will be taken by the most disqualified disputants on the same side as having supplied a truly sociological justification for a war

of aggression where he has really given no sociological argument worthy of the name. He will be quoted and echoed when he writes (pp. 147-8) that :

"If we do not exactly (!) say that all successful wars are just wars, we admit that no nation is *justified* in engaging in war unless with a *reasonable prospect* of success. We may forgive or admire the courage of desperate men fighting for a *lost cause*; but *we* should *condemn* a government which *knowingly* led a people into a *hopeless* contest, or continued it after it became *clear* that a prolongation of bloodshed and suffering could not affect the ultimate issue except by inducing the victor to impose harder terms."

It would surely be difficult to write on an ethical problem more sentimentally, more laxly, more unscientifically. Every term I have italicised is used arbitrarily and uncritically. It ought to be needless to point out that no people or government ever went "knowingly" into a "hopeless" struggle; that some always have hope; and that a hundred struggles which have often seemed hopeless to onlookers, and even to many of the fighters, have ended in triumph. It was so with the seven years war of the American colonies for their independence; it was so with the war of Bruce against Edward I.; it was so with the far longer war of the Netherlands against Spain. Thus all the vocabulary of conditional reprobation comes to nothing in the present case, on which Professor Ritchie's bearing can be seen between the lines: his judicatory "we" has not yet emerged, and will probably never emerge, unless the very spirit of moral courage disappears. All the while, the Professor has omitted to put this really indisputable proposition, that "we condemn" any government which is seen to have grossly miscalculated the nature, cost, and duration of a great military enterprise, good or evil. Such, once more, are the singular practical oversights of an ethical method which appeals solely to the test of experience precisely where that is the least peremptory test, and then ignores all the experience that happens to be really relevant.

When the general aspects of the problem, objective and subjective, have been thus faced, there remain to be made some particular inquiries at which, as at the others, Professor

Ritchie has glanced very superficially. Take in particular that raised in the following passage (p. 140) :

"Moral precepts such as 'Love your enemies' are addressed to individuals, not to nations, which are only metaphorically persons: and such precepts are, perhaps, more often fulfilled by the brave soldier who has no hatred in his heart against the individuals of a hostile nation, than by those preachers, politicians and journalists, who seem to think the commandment means, 'Take the side of the enemies of your country and prove your righteousness by imputing corrupt motives to her statesmen.'"

The purport of this infelicitous passage seems to be that love of enemies is commanded, and is desirable, as between fellow-citizens but not as between nations; but that nevertheless a soldier may love the members of a hostile nation more than the opponents of the present war love the war-mongers. As the soldier is thus declared to be perverting the commandment, it is not clear wherein his merit consists in the eyes of his eulogist. But if we put aside the confusion and the irrelevant animus, there remains the practical issue, Is this war seen to promote good-will or ill-will and good or bad habits among men; and does the resistance to it make for good-will or ill-will, or for good or bad intellectual habits? I should answer thus:

1. There are doubtless soldiers who slay without hate, though it is far from clear whether they have any special gift for loving either their enemies or their neighbors.

2. But the normal effect of war on the soldier is certainly to heighten his lower passions *of all kinds*; and in the present war we have frequent record of (a) ferocity towards the vanquished Boers, and (b) the practice of robbery (looting) as against women and non-combatants. This is in the normal way of all wars of conquest.

3. Among civilians, it is the advocates of the war who alone have resorted to domestic violence as against opposing propaganda; but this violence has been so frequent and so gross as to suggest new developments of incivilization under the auspices of the ideals maintained by Professor Ritchie.

4. The phrase "enemies of *your country*" is a question-begging formula unworthy of discussion. But the imputation of

corrupt motives to statesmen is in the ordinary way of political strife, has always been common, and certainly stands for no greater stress of ill-will than is manifest in gross aspersions by popular statesmen against the character of opponents who have not charged them with personal corruption. For the rest, charges of corruption against statesmen are perfectly fit where they are believed to be true; and their ethical condemnation is to be compassed only by disproving them—a process alien to the purposes of this journal, where, it seems to me, such a point should not have been thus introduced.

7. On the other hand, war-mongering in the case before us has visibly involved an enormous amount of racial malice and racial arrogance, habits of mind plainly unpropitious to civilization; and, in the opinion of some of us, an immense demoralization in the way of reckless credence, reckless vilification, and unscrupulous argument. If the opposing attitude involves even bitter censure of such vices, it makes none the less for a state of international tolerance, and sets in the intellectual life an example of national self-criticism, broadly favorable to moral improvement.

If, however, it should actually turn out on the contrary that the anti-war spirit meant a multiplication of partisan malice, it would be the merest inconsistency on the part of Professor Ritchie to make that a ground for discrediting it. On his principles, massacre and rapine and devastation may be good things as leading to the spread of constitutional government, which, as aforesaid, he seemingly takes to be a form of good needing no recommendation and admitting of no cavil. Unless, then, he can show that partisan malice cannot possibly lead to the spread of constitutional government, he has done nothing, in terms of his own code, to impeach it. It is surprising with what confidence a thinker who rejects as arbitrary the most considerate assumptions of serious ethics can take his stand on the most conventional assumptions of the political platform.

But that, when all is said, is the common course of most who go about to read the problems of ethics backwards. In order to put in doubt the moral principle of reciprocity, they must

needs assume to put out of doubt at once some of the most disputable of speculative propositions and some of the commonest popular convictions. In an old discussion with Professor Ritchie, I argued against a doctrine which seemed to me to open the way for endless degradation of living men and women on the hypothesis that by that means their or our posterity could be benefited. As such a hypothesis in the nature of things is absolutely incapable of proof, or even of logical support from a scientific scrutiny of experience, I entered a protest against overriding the moral claims of contemporaries on the score of "superstitions about posterity."* That protest I would here repeat, as being the formal upshot of the foregoing examination of Professor Ritchie's conditional plea for wars of conquest. A theorem which justifies the negation, whether as between individuals, between classes, or between nations, of the moral principle of reciprocity, on the score that such negation may somehow make for "civilization," is to my thinking as truly a superstition as any barbaric cult which ceremonially sacrifices human victims to appease the unknown gods.

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*In a footnote to his work on "Natural Rights," Professor Ritchie has quoted the phrase without context or elucidation, thus conveying to most readers the notion that I had derided the concern for posterity. This I never did, under any circumstances. But Professor Ritchie had repeatedly made light of sympathetic concern for predecessors and contemporaries.